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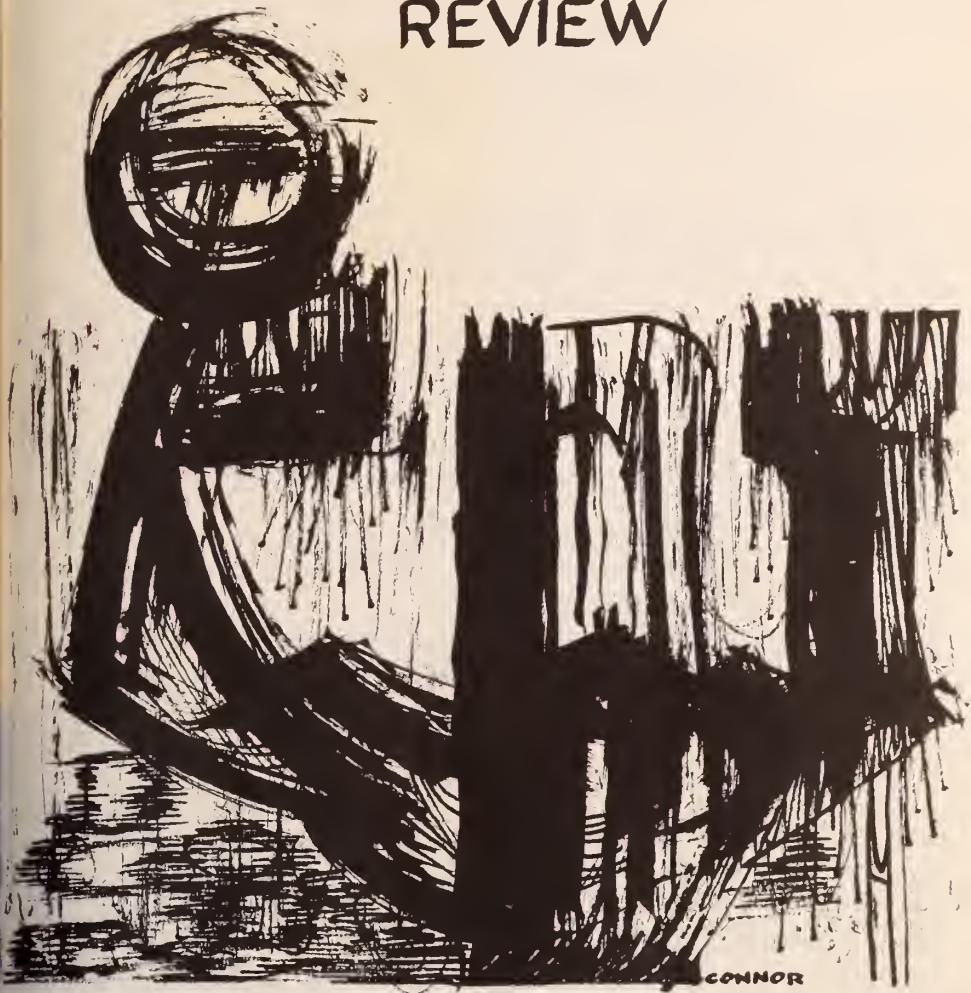
*Archives
of Spring 1969*

SPRING

calvert review



CALVERT REVIEW



SPRING - 1967

Editor, Ralf Multhopp; Staff, Carol Sharlip, Susan Gordon, Judy Levy, Chris Keane, Jack Stone, Jack Lieblein, Gary Imlay, Stephen White; Art Advisor, Bernie Himmelstein. Copyright 1967, by the Calvert Review, University of Maryland. Copyright reverts to authors upon publication. The Calvert Review is published twice a year by the University of Maryland and the Student Government Association. Manuscripts should be addressed to the Calvert Review, c/o English Department, University of Maryland, College Park, Md. Opinions expressed or implied by the contributors do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or publisher.

TO MY COUNTRY/RACHEL

A TRANSLATION FROM HEBREW

I have never sung to thee, my country,
Nor glorified thy name
With heroic adventures
Or with battles of great fame.
Only a tree did I plant
On the Jordan's quiet banks,
Only a path I trod with thanks
In a field.

Alas, very poor,
Mother I know it,
Very very poor
Is thy daughter's offering.
Only a cry of joy
On days of thy light,
Only a weep in the night
Over thy poverty.

— J. Lev

THE GREAT COMPOSER

— A. B. Perlmeter

It's alright. It really is. And if I can reassure you by saying that an incredible number of testimonial dinners continue to hear each other out across the land, why then none of us has anything further to add. Yet I shall continue to speculate about the possibilities where, as Charles put it, "in some fields fresh fish grow."

Charles Crash and I, along with several others, had been asked by the authorities to provide criteria and conclusions towards the amelioration of a growing national embarrassment, namely the electronic compositions of Gregory Series. This 50-year-old composer, whom many felt to be the symbol of subversion and cancerous perversity, was growing considerably in favor abroad, having long been vogue in the underground here. Congressmen had heard the tapes and were hysterical.

The consultants assembled were in agreement that precisely operational assessments deliver speed and efficacy in rendering unto aggravation its customary due. It was our plan, then, to intercept each tape and modify and rework it according to precise and undeniably efficacious formulae of artistic conciliation and castration.

We also could not help but feel that our report had dealt nicely irrefutable blows to the threats of participatory bureaucracy, only to discover that the report was to be matrixed with 17 others. This parliamentary device, together with the subsequent death of Charles, ended all effective resistance to their plan.

"You should have seen the look on Professor Grope's face when I told him about the process which had affixed our findings in the correlative pre-Hatch down at Pout," said Charles shortly before he left. "We were in his kitchen and I swear to God, Donald, I thought he would knock over his teacup and spit in the sink for all the hatred I saw in his features at that minute. Naturally, whatever either of us said then would not be quite it and I remember thinking, you know, that really it would never be quite it for any of us ever again."

Nothing came out naturally and, as Charles predicted, the Senate Subcommittee's tribute to his work was certainly not quite it. They proceeded to implement our findings out of recognition, duly matrixed and cross-referenced with every available vicious political tribulation from Washington to the horizon and beyond.

It is not so easy for me to say these things. I shall be punished. But it was also impossible for us to quit, to go back to the university and steep in our liberal juice for some time until we could possibly release our anxiety in some precisely punctuated analysis or other, earning none of the respect but only the malignant sympathy of our students. And our colleagues? What of them? They have enough difficulty simply producing children and trying to salvage a little of their occupational pomposity after timid Saturday night pot parties.

So we hung around for two months. On July 5 we were in a fourth floor room at 179th between Como and Grippie with an agent. He had been watching Mr. Series' third floor room across the street with a large telescope and parabolic listening device for almost a year.

"How is he?" Charles asked.

"Today he is working on a new composition. He sent out at 11:00 this morning for new tapes and a dozen eggs. Both items were delivered to him around 11:30."

"When did he begin?"

"Shortly thereafter. He finished checking the second oscillator, satisfied himself that his preliminary notes were sufficient, and then plugged in and sat at the window."

"He hasn't moved?" I asked.

"Would you like to look?"

"Thank you."

Mr. Series was sitting abreast of the window and in front of him were three audio-frequency oscillators and several recorders. He would make continual adjustments. He would look out the window in his semi-blindness. One could make out vaguely the room beyond filled with an ugly mess of difficult leavings and detritus, the things a delivery boy would bring.

It was after first hearing his compositions that I had decided to cooperate. They were unbearable. They were unbearably, intensely, frightening, American like the smell of cooking in every single room. Impossible. Suffering from insomnia as he did, suffering from peripheral circulatory difficulties as he did, suffering from irregular intestinal function, suffering from indistinct skin irritations, suffering from disobedient orifices, suffering from gentle spasmodic tics, from flutters, from stirrings, from refusals, from quiet muscular vagueness, inconclusive probings, dry-wet, de-emphasis reversals, light, heavy, leavings, bothers, seen puzzling out of the window peering onto the flickered hills of the cityside, puzzling how many times had the gangs shifted gears along the jungle slopes, he could not be permitted not allowed or trusted to continue to compose.

Black cars had begun parking at the ends of the block. At a signal from the agent, agents got out and entered the building across the street. Through

the telescope I saw one of them remove his earphones. The composer remained seated looking out the window. Two agents brought him out of the house in handcuffs and the others followed with his equipment. Charles went away. Everybody went away. I looked out the window into a framed vision of suicidal dusk birds.

Black cars had begun parking at the ends of the block two weeks later in Pittsburgh when Charles entered the snack bar. There were two fifteen-year-old girls sitting in front of the juke box. Four young boys sat behind them. The girls had been there for some time. They are still there, because I've seen them. And they are always smoking cigarettes and blowing smoke at the ceiling, and looking at each other whenever the boys behind them think of something to say. "You from New York, huh. Well let's see your driver's license." The girls say they don't drive and all the men in the snack bar, ranging in age from 35 to 50, sigh, turning slowly in their seats and the four boys crack their big cigarette-lighters shut. Charles sat there that night watching this and eventually noticing an intermittent movement of men back and forth from the bathroom.

The suggestion operated almost immediately and Charles went along inside the mens room. There is space for only one in there. There is simply a toilet and a sink, and at about midnight there was simply the body of Charles Crash, dead of a heart failure. On the inside of the door in front of his face a writhing lexicon of obscenities seemed to gnarl and swirl around the figures of two naked girls remarkably drawn. They tried to realize themselves in speech. They gave the girls on their knees with lips pursed, two girls hunched like dogs, two girls feeling each other, two girls on top of each other, two girls, two girls, feeling, entering, opening, spreading, open, offering, sucking, sighing, chewing, giggling, two, inside, spreading, open, dogs, backs, whispering, moan, steaming, two, twoing. And a foot rises off the floor in spasm for Charles who is off and exploding and dying like a white blast inside of everything.

Please don't argue with me. I have been to Charles' trap and seen. Gregory Series was strapped into the correlative pre-Hatch at Pout having a testimonial dinner in his honor, the two girls were blowing smoke at the ceiling, and the four boys were cracking their lighters, and the men were turning slowly in their seats, stoking the soft white fires as the whole god-dam building moved through surfaces of far-reaching co-operation and through night. An observation balloon filled with Congressmen passed overhead.

PSYCHE

Sometimes I consecrate
My body to a stark and pale goddess who
Believes in nothing but defruited branches
Clasped against the darkness. But why should I
Be sterile in the spring? To lust is to die,
Though death reeks joy for those who mourn sweet flesh;
So let me die, or else savor the Lamb, once more
Couched in the soft grass. Brown butterflies
Soak up the sun or else flit aimlessly;
Perhaps their listless flight foreshadows death.
I flew through flower-beds with tangled weeds
Last night, resettled in some leaves, then dreamt
I was a moth, or some departed spirit
Lost among the breezes. Loved by none
Except bright memories remitted here,
I loathed the night. Then Love crept through the grass
And down the stars until he touched a wing,
And I awoke.

— Gary Imla

THE ARGUMENT FROM DESIGN

— Carolyn Banks

They came at five a.m., three look-alikes but for difference in size, their hair bleached near-white and piled or rolled or twisted or teased to impractical height.

"However do you people sleep?" I asked the question jokingly, but clearly drew a circle round myself. "Okay, snot," said the first, Justine, or Dusty as her name was formed through early mispronunciation. For most of our lives we'd lived just blocks apart, played together, studied together, giggled and competed, foolishly, so different even then. Something held us—not friendship—we were cousins, not friends, and, growing up, such distinctions are crucial.

We hardly ever wrote, perhaps once a year or less, a card at Christmas, or birthdays if either of us remembered. Sometimes we did, since she was ten days older than I and this had taken on great importance in our early years. But if neither of us remembered there were no hard feelings, and for the same reason we could settle into conversation easily, instantly, though our speech differed radically, hers wearing the double negatives I'd left behind with so much effort. With everyone, always, I felt a queer discomfort, never obvious, just at the beginning, almost a habit, like clearing one's throat.

At the age of 26 I was struggling through my junior year in college. Dusty wore too much makeup. We were attached partly because, for wildly different reasons, we had been outcast by our family. Dusty, because her dress bespoke promiscuity, I, because I had decided to somehow get through college. "Who the hell do you think you are?" my uncle Bernie had once screamed at me. Dusty could go back if she chose. If she married, if she produced the all-important child or children, she could go back, easily, to the Christmas Eves, the sweet wine, **kolatki**, the plastic curtains, the linoleum, the back-slapping, and overlapping of Polish and English. The roots? Her barstool chic was simply a matter of tailoring, of gloss. My own ostracism went beyond—it was begun when a librarian in a nearly always empty public library permitted me to read from the "adult" section on a juvenile card. Dusty was pretty and I could take out anything in the library except **Forever Amber**. It ultimately led me to know Eugene Gant's agonized parting with Eliza in a way no one in my Freshman English class could know it, but it kept me from knowing my mother, my father, my aunts and uncles. When I went back to Pittsburgh they would slip a saucer under my cup, self-

consciously, and rinse the dust from the cream pitcher. As though I'd forgotten the table with bread in the cellophane, milk in the carton, mayonnaise jars, lids, pickles, and coffee cups with spoons jutting out.

But she and her friends were here, standing on my carefully off-beat porch at five in the morning. They were amused by it, in a way different from the amusement I deliberately drew from the people I know. I had painted not so long before VOMEIO, ERGO SUM on the wall. Orange letters a foot high, clearly a device, but one which had become a source of embarrassment, an honest embarrassment which prevented me from painting over the letters, the phrase which in so curious a way had now become a truth. I could measure people by it—a risky business—the measure meant sharing, but not speaking, the same sort of awareness of the sham of it all a multi-staged thing, the meanest reaction being out-and-out dislike, and somewhere in the middle, the same sort of thrill-seeking assent I'd sought when I painted it. I had no idea, have no idea, of the last response. Stageless, I would guess, since this very sort of testing was another slogan, however private its meaning.

Having examined things they came inside. One of Dusty's friends Karen, was new to me. We were introduced and yet she said nothing. Carol, the last of the three, was a girl I'd met three summers before. Extremely tall, her figure was abundant, voluptuous, but without warmth, a risk that goes with frosted hair, a kind of zero-cool that belies what it means to suggest. She looked down at me as she had that summer, city mouse country mouse. She smiled. I could not recall having seen her smile before but she would, I reminded myself, after all be using my bathroom! Karen the quiet one, was flashily drab. She looked the part, but had none; she was simply there, why I could not tell.

Carol suggested they sleep awhile, poking her way into the bedroom emerging minutes later in an orange three-quarter length gown, trimmed of all things, in ostrich. Karen began to remove her clothes in the living room. I reminded her of the window and she went into the bedroom, coming out in bra and pants to address me for the first time. If I was staying up, would I call her at 10 a.m.? I wondered where I would have slept but decided it was for the best—I had fallen behind in my reading and had an essay by Hume on the existence of God to digest.

Dusty, who had gone into the bathroom, came out in a turtleneck sweater and slacks. How different were we after all? I had affairs; Dusty screwed. The men I'd known, most of them anyway, wrote me letters, some from Europe, others from all sorts of "in" places. If no one else, my mailman certainly knew who I was. Dusty did what she did, without the head patting. Certainly my flirtations had been fewer, certainly they had lasted longer, but mine, like hers, had not lasted. The difference was that I hoped

they would, while she knew better: the men I knew were too "civilized" to expect a one-night stand when they passed through town. We contended with the same thing, she, realistically, and I, vaguely hoping Orson Welles would come galloping off the moor, sweeping me grandly into the saddle. Rochester become Falstaff, with bad reviews to boot.

I made coffee. We talked. Hume supported my cup. I woke the girls when the time came. Did they want coffee? No. Orange juice, toast? No. They'd treat me to breakfast out. I assented and began, finally, to read Hume while they gathered in my bedroom making what seemed dozens of phone calls. Theirs was a seasonal sex, or at least, it was mainly so. It was funny, really, like a movie—baseball players in the summer, football players in the fall, winters off, and now the Yankees were coming. Carol broke the monotony by dating professional wrestlers. These, like my postmarks, gave context. All of us, in the major leagues! Hume lost out again, my distraction focused now on the incongruity: the feverish dialing, the stupid intention to ponder the existence of a god. I was smug despite myself.

Someone knocked on the door. It was Mrs. McElhaney, who lived upstairs. She asked to use the phone, explaining quickly but with no trace of panic, "Elmer's sister is dead—she was shot through the neck—a man she was living with. The funeral is Tuesday, I'll have to call my supervisor . . ." Still stringing words, startling words plainly spoken, I led her to the bedroom. Had they heard? Carol had hung up and slid over on the bed, a poof of orange. Mrs. McElhaney sat beside her and dialed. Karen, still undressed, patted her hair before the mirror. I did not look at Dusty, but returned to the couch and to Hume, who now seemed even more irrelevant than he had minutes before. Mrs. McElhaney came out, and I showed her, wordlessly, what words?, to the door.

"**What** did she say?" Carol ran in the minute the door had closed. "Did she say **shot?**" Trying to hold to the bald, flat tone Mrs. McElhaney had used, I began to tell her, repeating in the same disjointed phrases the outline I'd heard, casually, as one would give a plot summary. "What kind of people **are** they?"

I found myself talking of the drabness I'd seen upstairs, a drabness that reminded me of **Death of a Salesman** and which caused me to make excuses, to flee their apartment whenever they'd drawn me there. The coffee would be just about perked or I'd be expecting a call, anything, but let me go. They were so empty, so vague. Mrs. McElhaney with her protruding stomach, probably beer, her hair usually in pincurls, covered by a cotton bandanna for god knows what occasion. Mr. McElhaney, who didn't work out sat, fat and in a tee-shirt at the kitchen table, staring into the yard, talking baby-talk to the dog. Even the dog fit: Spot, old, a mongrel. I avoided them whenever I could, and on Thursdays, when Mrs. McElhaney

came down for the food section of the newspaper, I did little but force a smile. Once, I remember, I had made quite a hit by quoting a friend who'd said, "Society is for the Vomit People." And these were the vomit people the ones to run from, the sadness that will get you if you don't watch out.

The phone rang and the others, still in my room, stood aside while I answered it. It was a man and he asked for Virginia. "Virginia?" I was honestly puzzled. "Oh, Virginia McElhaney," I had not known her first name. I went upstairs to call her, but instead her husband came. Carol who was only partially dressed, hurried—modestly?—for my bathrobe. I sat once more on the sofa, having pointed to the room where the telephone was. Hume. The three came hurrying out of the bedroom, Dusty last, pulling the door shut behind her, physically confining Mr. Elhaney, the odor of his grief, his privacy becoming our relief. When he came from the room he looked as he always had. Again the three girls left the room, pursued by this man, this atmosphere, this tangible emptiness that enclosed him. I wished, too, that I could leave—stand up, run, drive off, jump. But he stood in the doorway and I sat, blankly, the book in my hands, no way out.

"Did she tell you how she died?" I was relieved. Cynically remembering when, years before, a neighbor's father had been killed in a fire. My neighbor had savored every detail, delighted, perversely, in the telling. Pride of a queer sort—I'm a celebrity, my dad was burned to death. So he was one of those people, and in my distaste I could be comfortable again. "Yes, she told me."

"She had a farm she bought herself. Massillon, Ohio. She was good. He began to cry, a man who's name—Elmer—I'd heard for the first time today. I put my hand out in a useless attempt to stop him, not reaching but trying to halt him, his threat, don't say it, don't, I don't want it said. She was good, probably the first time he'd said so. She was dead, beyond his beyond anyone's rules. All that was left were the bloodstains, the gore. Not at all the luxuriant death that Keats courted, not the low and delicious sound of death that enticed Whitman, just an empty death, a death that would make them celebrities in Massillon, Ohio, relatives of the deceased; a death that would find them seated on a bus surrounded by people who would never know, could never guess, air-conditioned, side by side, deciding too late that she was good, or not so bad after all, coping with the fact, the fact not the mythology of death.

Massillon would play it up big. A filler in the big city papers, Massillon would have an event.

He was gone and I shouted after him, running across the porch, "I'll feed your dog." Carol laughed, the offer centuries diluted, the feeble offer shouted at his back.

We went to breakfast. Carol extolled the virtues of Killer Kowalski. I wore Levis, tennis shoes, too tired to dress, elbowed awkwardly between them, the smell of hair spray and cologne.

Later, they dropped me off. The McElhaneys had gone and I found Spot inside their apartment, tied to the kitchen radiator, four cans of dogfood and an opener. I fed him, brought my books up, and as he ate, approached again the essay.

JADED DAME TIME, OR AFTERMATH OF THE EVE OF SEDUCTION

Where are they now:

Those fags who drank my Chivas Regal?

(Dead as a stone slew Lyndon's beagle.)

Where are the sequins that studded her ass?

(Dull with the lipped-butts in yesterday's grass.)

Where is her ass, to mention it now,

That belled in rear-view like a Jersey cow's?

(Wrapped in seconal on my ad-hoc bed,

While phallic asparagus dance in her head.)

— B. Jeffrey Price

TO AN OVAL TIN OF FLAVIGNY'S VIOLETTE

I.

Because pomegranate turns to onion
In my jaded mouth,
And rubies, unexamined, might
For all of me be bits of glass,
I can never altogether laugh or wail
With or at the sight of green-aged
Poetry, jiggling up clowns'
Empty sawdust trails.

II.

Her priests all carry placards now,
And perch in prisons overnight
To prove they really care.
Transepts resound as bingo parlors
That supplant wine presses
Once used by those
Who, by crushing Now,
Drank ever after each
His own blood.
The cave, the timbered mead hall,
And Aubrey Beardsley's drawing room
Are now acoustic tombs
For the ceremony of words.

III.

To set the scene,
Call it: **printemps**,
The incipient, the early spring
In which slices of life
Sigh to be set.
Days to commemorate
With incantations;
The time, in fact,
One ought
To write a poem.

IV.

I set my foot
In the second moss
Of Nature's local representative,
The park.
My craft,
(A kennel of niggling semblances
Sired on Beldam Adjective,)
As ready as ever.

V.

"It feels, it sings
A wholesale green;
It rings in circlets
On hammer and stirrup
Let out of earmuff."
Could my words
Chloroform a day?
A timeless myth could do no harm.

"A gimp-foot, bearded tramp at twilight
Paused beneath my window,
Planting emblematic pansies
And whistling doric moods
In the gaudy night below."

—To no avail.
I was debilitated,
Self-conscious of my tongue.
So I sat and breathed,
In pools of mannered sighs,
And picked off the bark
Of a fallen hemlock.
Yellow wormwood flowers
Numbed the afternoon.
The sky, censorious,
Relaxed its alabaster fundament
And shit on me its—shall I say—
"Tears of tourmaline."

VI.

That was just after noon.
Now the mood has passed, or will never come:
Leave the dishes in their scum.
Melt your fingers, soothe your palms
In a drug store's nimble balm.
Sit and play me sleepy
With some Brahms, re-arranged
For a home-built clavichord.

VII.

When we wore "linen," not underwear,
Ceremonies with words filled drawing rooms.
Poets, like spinnets, **de rigueur**, were everywhere,
When we wore "linen," not underwear,
Stepping from sedate roll-tops, or out of laudanum lairs
To recite lavender airs with sprays of poetic rheum,
For when we wore "linen," not underwear,
These ceremonies could still fill drawing rooms.

VIII.

The Clown is sleeping in the clouds
With the lachrimose gems
My Muse attributes to mid-day.
The wet night has forgotten
Just how a pomegranate tastes.
Up the city's flaking cul-de-sacs
Poetic skivies, wrung over bathtubs,
Are hung to dry on radiators.
My tub stands on Georgian legs,
And though I am not old
I think my paint is flaking.
But I may live till tomorrow,
To rise on the morrow
And with a new suite of words
Be again a poet.

— B. Jeffrey Price

"NOT JUST FOR PENNIES"

—James Crivella

They was downstairs now. I didn't know who they was but I prayed it weren't Father Lord. He'd been as nice to me as anybody'd been ever. Every night I'd walk over into the parking lot and he'd be there under the light, leaning on the building, reading a little black book. He always had that book and he always waited there for me with some candy or somethin' 'cuz we was pals.

I hope we still is pals. He knows I didn't want it to happen. Bruther is my friend. He's always been my friend ever since he moved on the block with his nine brothers and sisters.

"Jo Jo, you open this door, you hear? Open it or I knocks it down. Open it!"

I opened it. I opened it the first time she said to, but that didn't make much difference. She screamed and hollered anyhow, (she bein' my mama).

"Get down there, you little bastard," she said. "Get down there and tell all you know or I tans your black hide good."

I followed her down the steps. And there he was, Father Lord. My stomach felt like it does when I gets hit there by my old man. I wouldn't look at him. I'd look at my shoes.

"Hello, Jo Jo," he said. "We have to find out how it happened. Just tell us a little about it, Jo Jo, just a little about it."

Then I looked from my shoelaces to Father's, to somebody else's, and somebody else's, and to somebody else's. There were three of 'em other than Father Lord. I wasn't gonna look though. They know'd what happened and I wasn't gonna tell 'em anything.

"Come on Jo Jo," he sez, "be a big boy. It wasn't your fault. We know it's hard, but tell us. Tell us for Bruther's sake."

The one pair of shoelaces belonged to another priest. I could tell from the black cuffs. The other belonged to my old man. I could tell 'cuz there weren't no cuffs but continentals. And the last ones belonged to somebody with wide blue pants. Slowly I raised my eyes. It was just like I thought, a cop, and a colored one too. I could tell from his hands. But I wasn't lookin' any higher up.

"Jo Jo, you damned sneak, either you tells or I brings you into the bathroom and you gets it with my belt," said my old man.

"Please, Mr. Simms, he hasn't done anything wrong. We just want to know how it happened," said the other father.

I starts to thinkin'. If I tells, the worse than can happen is Father Lord won't see me again. If I don't, my old man'll beat me 'til I'm blue. I was gonna tell. My old man was never my pal but maybe Father Lord'll still be

"Please, Jo Jo," said Father Lord.

Then I gives him a look right in the face. And I know I could tell him I think.

"Well, Father, it's Alfred's fault," I sez. "It's everybody's fault but 'specially Alfred's. You know, Father, how we plays in front of the school every day."

"Well, we was playin' hide 'n' seek. And that's when it happened. He just ran out from in between the cars, Father. That's all. That's all!"

I felt tears comin'. But I wasn't gonna let 'em come.

"Bruther's small and the man couldn't see him," I said. "He's small. Father. The boys couldn't help hurtin' him. I mean the man couldn't help hurtin' him. Oh Father!"

I couldn't hold 'em any longer. I cried out loud and I kept cryin'.

"Okay, Jo Jo, the worst is over. Here, take my handkerchief," said Father.

"Dry your face and start from the beginning," he said.

I dried my face but the tears kept comin' and comin'. I was getting dizzy but they probably felt worse. So I started again.

"The boys were comin' from church. They was in one long line and big priest with thick glasses was watchin' them," I sobbed.

"It was Alfred, he's our leader, Bruther, he's his brother, Sydney, and me. We was playin' ball in the street. Then the ball bounced into the hedge. You know, Father, the hedge in front of the school.

"Alfred, he's our leader, went right through the line of boys and got it

"The big priest turned his back and some white boy bent over and se 'Boo! little nigger boy'.

"All the big boys thought that was funny but we didn't. So Alfred came back to us and whispers, 'Let's get 'em, men. Get some rocks from the gutter and we can pounds 'em.'"

"That was a good idea we figured. So we began to throw sticks and rocks from the street. But the big boys just laughed 'cuz we couldn't real"

nurt them. So we started cussin', and stickin' out our tongues, and kept browin' the rocks, Father.

"The end of the line came. And the last big boy caught a rock, rolled it on the ground, and sez kinda friendly to Bruther, 'Why don't you big boys come in and join us for lunch?'

"We figured that was a good idea, too. So we crept in the door into a hall. No, that's wrong. I mean it wadn't all of us. Bruther stayed outside sayin' he remembered you said never to go in there. And he didn't want you mad at him.

"I should of stayed outside too, Father. You told me that too, but I didn't think about you then.

"The boys were in a big lunchroom. All of them standin'. They didn't see us 'cuz we was behind the door and lookin' through the glass in it.

"Then, Alfred sez, 'Let's go in.' But instead, Sydney ran outside through the other door.

"I should of gone too, but I didn't. Anyhow, Alfred and me opened the door. They saw us. You know what happened then Father? Everybody started clappin'. I looked at Alfred and his eyes were real big, real big like marbles.

"Then the priest walking around told some boy to 'usher our guests out, please'. So we decided that was the time to leave. While we was runnin' away, a colored big boy with a lunch bag in his hand passed us. But he didn't say nuthin' or even look at us. Then as we was goin' out the doors leadin' outside, he went through the doors leadin' inside. And everybody started clappin' for him too, Father. They clapped for him too.

"Bruther ran up to us and asked if we'd seen you, Father. We told him no, and he said that was good. I figured that was good too, Father.

"He said we should go outside and not get into any trouble.

"So we started playin' ball again. And the boys went back to their rooms, I guess, 'cuz we could hear 'em sayin' prayer from a classroom.

"A little later, a pimple-faced boy threw a penny out the window at us. So naturally we stopped playin' ball and started hollerin' for more pennies. All except Bruther, he wadn't hollerin'.

"But we got 'em. Three for Sydney and me and four for Alfred 'cuz he's our leader.

"Then a priest hollered out the window to 'get movin', buddies, or somebody's going to move you but fast'. He was mean, Father, not like most priests."

I looked at Father right in the eyes when I said that and he nodded but not too much. It was then that I looked at the other priest and sure enough it was him, the one in the window. But he looked kinder now so I kept talking.

"It was then that it happened, Father. Somebody pitched a nickel, a bright, shiny nickel. Bruther was the closest and he ran for it even though he didn't run for the pennies.

"The car ran right over his chest, Father, right in front of all of us. The car couldn't stop 'cuz there weren't no time. Bruther was screamin' loud, Father. There was blood all over his body.

"That's when you came out and said the prayers, Father. I'm glad you did that, Father. You know I ain't a Catholic but Bruther is and he seemed sort of happier when you finished.

"Lord, I hope he gets better. Say he'll get better, Father. Say it, please."

Father picked me up. That was the first time he ever did that. And he looked me right in the eyes. He didn't have to say it. It was written in them big blue eyes. Poor Bruther was never gettin' better and it was everybody's fault.









AUGUST, THE ILLUSION

There are moments in this chaos because it whirls
away and back,
never farther than moths from porchlight,
moments, an eye,
when the center hits full round,
all faces inward calm, and the buzzing stops,
or dims outward too far to hear,
and breath comes back,
we can brush the hair out of our faces,
moments, because it whirls
away and back, when we take courage, hope to flee
never farther than the moths from porchlight
but nevertheless, we hope to flee for a moment
because it whirls and the center hits full round,
and the buzzing stops, and breath comes back,
and we get the hair out of our faces,
there are moments
when this happens, precious moments,
when the center faces
are inward calm,
and we can smell honeysuckle and see field fireflies,
and the summer has form again, and we take courage,
hope to flee as far as moths do from the porchlight,
Moments.
And then it comes again, the center fades,
we hear the annoying, the fatal hover sound, the whirl
back, the all-flanks-inverted-downward
sound of it flying, and breath goes out,
and the summer out, and we are going with it,
the center light,
held in the darkness of storm wings,
out.

— L. S. Gordon

We used to go swimming at Smith's pond. A brook had been dammed up by a wall of grey granite from the quarry to form the pond. It must have been dammed to provide water power for manufacturing. Nearby stood four-floor, box-shaped factory. Downstream was Kingman's pond and factory, Rockwell's pond and factory, Whitney pond and factory. At Rockwell's they made yarn and rolled it onto spindles for weaving. The old machinery still ran. Belts transmitted the power from electric motors now in place of the old waterwheels. At Whitney's, it was said carriages were made. At Smith's I do not recall what was made. Father said pianos. Most of the old shops still stand. They became celluloid, paper box, and plastic molding shops in turn. All that was needed was to rip out the insides, put in some machines, add a few barrels of resin, and pull a hot comb from the choking fumes.

FINDING LOST TIMES #12:

JOHNSON'S FARM

— Sherman K Poultney

I worked at the machines for one whole month once. It was the graveyard shift. I really don't know how I survived with the noxious fumes, inverted hours, continual drowsiness, and menacing steel jaws. Some men spent their whole lives at the monotonous routine. The jobs paid poorly so that these men were some of the poorest in the community. We would see them in church for awhile until they joined the Salvation Army. They were usually the drifters and the drinkers, but not always. Many second-generation French-Canadians and Italians worked in the factories. If they lived at home and didn't marry, they managed to live on the pay. During that month and the two summers I worked in a packing room of one of the factories, I got to know these old and young. But more of that another time.

On the northeast bank of the pond was an orchard. Passing through it and over the brook was a cowpath to the pastures beneath the blue hills to the northwest. There was no sand on the shore of the pond for a beach.

nly a fine brown mud (like at Massapog) with green tufts of grass here and here. The water must have been muddy with all the people there, but I never noticed. Across the pond were the houses on Granite street. To the south, the dam. The older boys would dive off of it into the deep water at its base. There were occasional drownings. We never went near the dam until much later. My grandmother Poultney had almost drowned at Lake Amoset. We stood instead on the other bank; watching the divers as our toes tugged at the tufts of grass. Later, when the dam had been pulled down and only the brook remained, we walked the grassy bottom to where the deep pools had been. We were fishermen then. On one expedition, we saw a water-snake way up-stream. A slithering, beady-eyed horror. We were older and the weaving coils held little terror.

There were two ways to get to the pond. Sometimes we would park below the dam and walk up to the eastern shore over a stony wood-road. At other times, we would walk through farmer Johnson's pasture and cross the cowpath fence to the shore. His house was a blue, white-trimmed New England farmhouse set up on a raised lawn on the west side of West street near University street. To the south was his barn. To the north, was the cowpath and pasture. Only very seldom in my early days did we walk all from our house. To do it, we would leave the brow of the hill we lived on, walk down a stony, dirt road towards Johnson's large orchard, across a little brook, through the orchard, up the hill opposite, and then across Meriam avenue to West street.

I visited Johnson's with my father occasionally. It was either to sell or to buy. I think my first visit to a farm was here. It was at milking time. The cows were in their worn, wooden stalls. There were fetid odors, lowing, bails, stools, and a radio. I never found out whether that radio was for the benefit of the cows or not.

The barn is now gone as is the house. The north pasture has become the yard of a parsonage. The south, an old folks home of the city. Farmer Johnson and his cronies are gone forever. The last one died just a year ago. The greatest loss to me, though, was the orchard. We had visited it in all seasons. Skiing and sledding in the Winter. Stealing apples and watching the hayrers in the Fall. The green apple wars, pilfered salt cellars, and belly-aches of Summer. But most wonderful of all was the Spring; water rushing in the brook, minnows, tadpoles, bull-frogs, wet feet, grassy banks, wild iris, singing birds, the coming of dusk, night symphonies, the majestic maples on the rise above the brook. This memory, too, may soon fade from my mind as the places have from history. The brook now runs through a pipe beneath a black-top road. The maples have fallen. New houses dot the slopes. Only a few broken and unkempt apple trees remain to witness to the former glory of the orchard.

One memory will not fade, however. At dusk one evening in the late summer, that foreboding time of filtered light and heavy heat, we had heard something and had somehow found our way to a point across West street from Johnson's farm. It was at the beginning of World War II. An eerie column of trucks, cannon, and tanks was moving up West street to the north. I do not recall seeing a single soldier or driver. It was a ghost column moving into an unknown region. I had not yet been up West street any further than this. Neither did I understand the war. The wait before a radio listening for the blast. The celebration of VJ day's black-ink headlines. I did sense, though, the death stalking that ghost column moving into the gloom. The gloom that before long would claim the entire surroundings.

THE WINNER

Ray had a crooked-
toothed grin
That took all
The other boys in
And down every bar
To his sharp cracks
Of what the world is for
And why
To never mind it—
There were only tight days
On his ship, but
Ray was too quick
For any brass
To get
Until he tripped
From the upper deck rail
And almost took leave
Of his neck—
As he picked himself up
For the last time,
He said, "I'm all right,"
Then he sank, hemaplegic,
In to a nerveless
Mass of white
Sweat,
But he can still
Curse
And when he bet
On the ponies
In Miami
It was his horse,
She's Willin',
Came in.



— Natalie Gawdiak

"GIRL WITH EARRINGS"

Renoir brought the women to our evening tea.
Women built in scale with
 their Gallic ancestors.
With rings round, and
fleshy they seated themselves to
comb their thick hair.
Dug fingers in butter sauce,
 pudgy cheeks, red and slick,
Smiling past us, and waiting.

Pierre Renoir was loud as evening
 grew drunk.
Berthe was his,
and the red wine slurred
his speeches on nudes and how
 he got 'em afterwards,
 and how
water enhances a good breast
and ya can't beat a good ass.

Claude Manet, or was it Monet
 came later.
Ripping newspapers
complaining about how hard
 his fingers had become.

And Renoir, not quite himself
said "Ma nip u la sion!"
 pinching his woman, and
not knowing
 That tomorrow we would tie
 a brush to his wrist.

— L. Wildberger

ODYSSEUS RETURNED: A TRAGEDY

— Sherman K Poultney

Often, even in the midst of one of his wild adventures, auburn-haired Odysseus would think back to sea-girt Ithaca. His huge frame would shudder at such times for he knew that one day his tired, old body and mind would force him to return to that narrow isle. No, it was not Penelope. Her beauty and talents challenged those of any of the maids or matrons that he had known in the hollow thigh of the night. The formidable Circe of the dazzling robes, beautiful-voiced Calypso with the lovely locks, the youthful, white-armed Nausicaa; Penelope rivalled them all. Yet each was new and different. A strange shore to gain and an unknown land to explore. Indeed, it was a pleasure to sojourn so; as long as the journey was later continued. So much easier to live a brief time with each than to live continuously with one. Had not even the Nymph Calypso ceased to please after a time?

It was certainly true that he did not really need Penelope. She was of no economic value. He and his men plundered for everything they desired whenever they desired. Her care was not needed. His cook, fool, and minstrel watched over him. Her companionship was not unique. He had his choice at each new landing. In fact, he did not care at all for the work or domestic cares that make for a fine family. He was much more interested in polished javelins, arrows, and ships with oars. As he found out, these were not the proper concerns of a family man. He loved brave crews, outwitting his foes, fighting, plundering countrysides, sacking cities, and magnifying his adventures in the tales he told. For these he had left home and would never return.

Home. It was not Penelope, but home that caused him to shudder. He had sailed the wide oceans of the world, dined with mighty kings in their great palaces, talked with the wisest of sages, heard the most marvelous of minstrels, had seen multitudes of strange people and their exotic customs, had plundered vast riches, bested the world's best warriors and athletes, descended into Hades' own Halls, and had even vied with the gods themselves. What was there at Ithaca for him? Some old, worn-out warriors that had fought at his side at Ilium, an island of slaves working strenuously all day to eke out a living from the rocky soil of their narrow island, weak-kneed landowners who lived in continual fear of sea-raiders and refused

to go with him to raid the Cephellanian kingdoms for rich plunder of cattle sheepskins and rough wool instead of purple cloaks, goatskins and crude pottery instead of gold cups and silver basins, goat cheese and barley bread in place of sumptuous banquets, rough huts instead of palaces, and solemn religious festivals only twice a year. What prospects were there for mighty Odysseus, the auburn-haired world-traveler?

Yet, after that last sea wreck, when the warring winds and crashing waves tore his dark ship to pieces, drowned his long-haired crew, swallowed him for near two days in the angry depths, and then had thrown him alone onto a rocky, barren shore, Odysseus, exhausted to his very soul, knew finally that he had to return home. He had grown too old. No longer could he hold his own against the world. His laughter of derision would no longer ring out the weak of the world. He must fall back to that low place from which he so long had fought to free himself. That place where routine prudence, and drudgery prevailed. All his craft seemed to have failed him in the end.

For the longest while he lay in the tidal pool that had claimed him from the sea. Life slowly came back to his swollen flesh and exhausted body. His raw lungs eased their gasping. He sat up and looked around. All about him in the pool were the reds, greens, and yellows of algae, Irish moss, and brachwort. There; a delicate white shell. Here; a clump of mussels and a lone dog welk. Down the coast, the great seas were battering the rock-bound shore. The thunder of the surf rolled rhythmically over his ears. The land was veiled in spray. Out over the white-capped breakers, a lone, wild sea-hawk drenched the feathers of its wings as it pursued its prey in the rich, unharvested, fish-filled sea. But Odysseus saw only the white home of the barnacle. Was this what he had to look forward to? The precarious life of a barnacle. Chained to live at one spot, afraid to venture out, utterly dependent on the kind chances of forward mother nature, and hoarding his last bits of energy and youth against an uncertain future. His proud, stubborn spirit still shone faintly; but flickered now and then as if to go completely out.

He knew not how, exactly, but he managed to gain a copse of trees above the shore where he fell asleep in a deep bed of leaves. The next morning he found a small bark in a nearby cove and set sail for home. With his steering oar he kept a straight course during the day. At night his eyes never closed for he kept the Great Bear on his left to maintain his steady course. After many days, he hove into sight of the high mountains of a familiar land. From there he inched his way south along the coast toward home. One day, he passed wooded Zacynthus and knew he was not far from Ithaca. In the strait between Samos and Ithaca by rocky Asteris, he began to dream. Those nineteen years away, Telemachus, Penelope's welcome, new sons to stand at his side when others failed him. Then to the west

toward evening, Ithaca was before him. Columns of smoke rose into the clear skies above the town. Many boats were still plying about the port. The hills above were silhouetted by that monstrous, red, setting ball-of-fire beyond. The wooded peak of windswept Neriton stood out above all the others. The sky turned blood-red as though a sign of things to come. Odysseus blinked his weary eyes. There above the town was a magnificent palace. From the shore came the bustle of people making their way home and sailors securing their sails. Bits of music drifted out to him. In the dying light, he saw that the town had grown tremendously in size. "What has happened?" he thought. The buildings were freshly whitened. Their roofs were new.

Dauntless Odysseus became confused. This was not the Ithaca that he knew. What would he find when he landed? Then his sly wits came back to him. It would be far better to land secretly and spy out the situation. He leaned on the steering oar and tightened the main sheet so that his white sail grew taut, turned, and headed straight for the cove of Phorcys', the Old Man of the Sea. He beached his small boat there just as dusk turned to night. Seeking out the vaulted-roof shrine sacred to the Nymphs, he made a supper of the week-old offering he found there. That night he slept in the nearby cave. Eerie night sounds added to his discomfort as he tossed and turned; worrying about plans for the next day. All too soon, Aurora raised her gentle hands and touched the East with pink. The cries of birds awakened Odysseus very early. He arose and looked around. All seemed so familiar: the still cove, the ancient shrine, and, above him, the forest-clad slopes of Mount Neriton.

"Why," he thought, "my faithful steward Eumaeus lived not far from here." I will go there in disguise as I did at Troy, beg for food, and find out what has happened during these past nineteen years if he still lives." Thus saying, he turned his back on the cove and followed a rough path through the hills toward Eumaeus' hut. He passed the pastures at Raven's Grag and the Spring of Arethusa where he stopped to drink. A short while later he found Eumaeus sitting in front of his homestead. The farmhouse stood on a small eminence in a clearing and was surrounded by a rude, wooden fence. The baying of fierce watchdogs heralded his approach. Eumaeus raised himself with a cane and quieted the dogs. He looked at the ragged Odysseus and asked, "What do you want with me, beggar?" "I have come upon bad times and have been left on the shore by pirates. Please help me." "Come then and breakfast. Afterwards, you can tell me more of your tale. It gets so lonely out here in the woods."

Odysseus gathered his few rags about him and entered the hut of Eumaeus. After a hearty meal, he leaned back and began. He told Eumaeus that he was a Cretan nobleman who had been kidnapped by pirates from

the north. They had killed his loving wife and stalwart sons and had kept him prisoner for five years. But, now that he was old and sick, they had left him on the shore of this unknown island. Thus saying, he grew siler and waited for Eumaeus to speak. He thought it best to let the old man talk as much as possible so as not to raise his curiosity by forward questions. Eumaeus spoke, "You unlucky man. Yet you could have landed in a far worse place. It is not often that pirates sail near here any more. In the old days we were pirates ourselves. My master was one of the fiercest and craftiest. One day he sailed off to Ilium to rescue red-haired Menelaus' father Helen and never returned. He left a beautiful young wife with a baby so at her breast.

"Oh, if only my wife and children still lived," said Odysseus, "I could return to live with them. I cared for them so much. There is no greater reward in life for two who see eye to eye than keeping house as man and wife and raising a family. Does Odysseus' wife still live?" "Yes, more lovely than ever. They say she patiently waits his return; turning down all suitors and weaving rich robes." "Did the boy live?" asked Odysseus. "Yes," replied Eumaeus, "he has grown to handsome manhood. For a while yet now he has been in Mycenae learning the arts of war, commerce, and government from the sages who sit there. He grew into a modest youth of good sense and faultless rhetoric. They say he soon will return to put on the crown and rule by his own decree." "Lucky the man that can return to such a family. The Fates have been kind," said Odysseus. "Yes, in a way," replied Eumaeus. "Yet, the disappearance of Odysseus caused great mourning on the island. Many wives lost their brave husbands. A good many people came to view Odysseus as being derelict in his duty. He had left Ithaca without a king to go adventuring in a distant quarrel, he did not bring his men safely back home, and he continued his adventures long after he should have returned home. His whole escapade was a dereliction of duty to country, people, and family. His mother, Anticleia, died of a broken heart waiting for her son's sail to appear. His father, Laertes, suffering under the terrible loss, withdrew to his farm. There, as old-age takes its toll, he lives like a servant in the dust waiting for his erring son.

"Odysseus was sorely missed, then." "At first by a few," replied Eumaeus, "but not for long. Times change. We found ourselves on a trade route between Mycenae, Cephellanae, and their colonies in Italy. We found it more rewarding to tax goods in transit than to plunder. Penelope proved a wise queen. Her police keep the trade route free of pirates. We have grown rich through her foresight and planning. The port has tripled in size. The buildings are new. Our queen has built a splendid palace. She always gets her way." "And yet she has not married again?" interrupted Odysseus. "No," replied Eumaeus. "Many rich suitors came; princes, rich merchants, owners of fleets, but Penelope still waits for the return of

Odysseus they say . . . But I must bore you. Take this old tunic and cloak to cover your rags. You should be able to find work in the port ahead. Follow the wide path to the left. Good day."

"Good day, worthy swineherd, and thank you," said Odysseus as he rose, put on the worn clothes, and left the farm. As he trudged toward town, the words of Eumaeus weighed heavily upon him. He felt like a relic of the past; a fossil of a bygone age. Yet, he was known as the craftiest man alive as well as being known for his piratical prowess. In addition, his wife waited for him. She, who had held his crown, raised his son, built a flourishing city, commanded a huge fleet, waited and would welcome him back as king. His son would stand at his side. All would turn out well he thought.

Odysseus headed first for town. He had to see all these new wonders for himself and he was particularly curious about how the people felt. The town had grown indeed. The buildings were new. The people were well-dressed; their backs straightened considerably since their farming days. They even looked their former landlords right in the eye. Odysseus tread cautiously and listened quietly. He would probably take no chances. He was afraid his wife's suitors might want to have him assassinated. It soon became clear that no one gave a thought to his possible return nor much less cared. Penelope was the one who was popular with the people.

That night he stayed in a small, dirty tavern. After eating a stale crust and drinking some sour goatsmilk, he retired early to mull over the situation. He pieced the picture together. The island had indeed been on a flourishing trade route. Gentle Penelope had seized on the opportunity under the advice of the wide-ranging trader Menelaus of Lacedaemon. Using great foresight, she had built up a new system of government. Her judges brought justice to the land. Her police gave peace to the people and safety to trading ships. Her fleets brought back great riches. Her artisans built new buildings and palaces. Her artists composed new lays and stories. Ithaca had flowered. All that Eumaeus had said was true. Wise Penelope had risen to new wealth and power, but still lived alone waiting for her long-lost Odysseus; weaving a great winding-sheet for his ailing father while suitors came and went. So the townspeople spoke and Odysseus thought.

Lost in the black night of his thoughts, Odysseus was soon conquered by sleep. The royal Odysseus lay in the dirty straw of the common room. All that night great dreams filled his head. He saw himself approach the palace in his rags and slip in by way of the kitchens. From there, he spied out the many suitors waiting for Penelope's answer; biding their time at his banquet table and consuming his wealth. He saw his wife in her small chamber weaving her web on the looms hung about her. Then he revealed himself to his son. Side by side they stood, spear poised, bow turned from its honorable use to slaughter the avaricious suitors. The great banquet hall

